



Massachusetts  
Department  
of  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION

## case study

# Town of Hamilton Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) Program

*In a Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) solid waste program, residents purchase preprinted stickers or bags for disposal of trash, thereby paying for the solid waste that they generate. There is no direct fee for recycling.*

<b>Community Population:</b>	8,374
<b>Households Served:</b>	2,630 (FY07)
<b>Services Provided:</b>	Weekly curbside trash and bi-weekly recycling collection

### Program Overview

- There is no annual curbside trash or recycling collection fee for residents. This solid waste collection service is paid for through the tax base.
- Curbside collection of trash is limited to one bag or barrel, up to 36 gallons in capacity. After one bag or barrel, residents pay \$1.75 per bag of trash.
- Residents are provided with unlimited bi-weekly recycling collection.
- PAYT bags are sold in packages of five.
- Program serves all residential dwellings up to four units.
- Residents and municipal officials in Hamilton refer to PAYT as their "Waste Reduction Program (WRP)" – a name that has received a positive response from the community.

### History

- In April 2006, the Town of Hamilton initiated a program of Enhanced Waste Ban Enforcement with the support of the Board of Selectmen. The Town established a system through which Hiltz Disposal (Hamilton's trash and recycling hauler) would leave behind any visible recyclables that were placed in trash instead of recycling bins. The town's trash tonnage dropped 10 percent during the first 12 months of this program.
- In October 2007, the Town voted to authorize the Board of Selectmen to institute fees in conjunction with a "Waste Reduction Program" (PAYT) to cover some or all of the costs of trash collection. Previously, the town's bylaws made no mention of fees and the Town Counsel advised Selectmen to obtain Town Meeting approval.
- In December 2007, the Board of Selectmen voted to limit residents to one bag or barrel of trash per household per week and set fees for official bags to be used if residents had excess trash.
- The new program commenced March 12, 2008.
- Small business waste collection is covered by the municipal program as long as it complies with state waste bans and the Town's PAYT program (limiting disposal to one bag or barrel per address per week). When given the option, some businesses chose to use commercial haulers instead of the municipal service.

### Implementation

- The bag vendor manufactures bags, warehouses inventory, and delivers official trash bags to stores. The company also handles billing and sends revenues to the Town on a monthly basis. Bags are distributed through three local retailers.
- Hamilton pays the vendor \$0.22 per large bag to manufacture the bags.
- Some additional effort was required to include a complex of small seasonal homes in the PAYT program. Overhead cables and wires had to be raised so collection vehicles could access the area. Once this was done, the complex converted from using four dumpsters to having curbside collection.

### Administration & Enforcement

- Revenues from bag sales are deposited into a Solid Waste Enterprise Account.
- There has been no increase in illegal dumping in Hamilton since the implementation of PAYT.

#### **Additional Waste Services**

- White goods: Drop-off area at DPW.
- Bulky waste: One item per week collected curbside (no fee).
- Mercury-containing products and batteries such as car & Ni-Cad: Drop-off at DPW, no charge.
- Yard waste: Drop-off at compost area.
- Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event: Held yearly.
- Electronics and cathode ray tubes (CRTs): Drop-off at DPW (for a fee).

#### **Waste Reduction Results in First Six Months Compared to Same Months of FY07**

- Over this period, trash decreased 35 percent (517 tons).
- Over the same period, recycling increased 24 percent (about 100 tons).
- Prior to the Enhanced Waste Ban Enforcement program, Hamilton's curbside recycling rate (=Recycling/(Solid Waste+Recycling)) was 17 percent. The rate increased to 23 percent before the start of the WRP. After the first six months, the rate increased to 28 percent.
- In the first six months, 24,000 33-gallon bags were shipped to local retailers.

#### **Financial Results**

- The cost of trash disposal in FY08 was \$71.50/ton, which means the town saved \$5,000 - \$8,000 per month and saved over \$36,000 in the first six months of PAYT compared to what the town would have spent if the trash tonnage was the same as in FY07.

#### **For More Information**

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